THE TAP CODE

Not all prisoners of war (POWs) were kept in prison camps. Some were isolated in individual cells and needed a method of communicating with other prisoners to share information. Morse code was unsuitable as it relied on long and short sounds, so a simple « tap code » was devised.

The « Tap Code » consisted of a grid of 25 letters. The letter « K » was missed out and, if needed, a letter « C » was used instead.

To send a message to a fellow prisoner of war (POW) nearby, the prisoner would tap on the wall or on a pipe.

To send each letter, first identify the letter in the grid. Tap the number in the left hand column to take you to the line on which the letter appears and then tap the number in the top row to take you across to the required letter. For example, to send the letter « M », make three taps (tap, tap, tap) then pause briefly before making two more taps (tap, tap).

The letter « C » would be : tap, pause, tap, tap, tap. The letter « U » would be tap, tap, tap, tap, pause, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap.

Simple !

Start practicing by simply tapping the table. You will soon get the hang of it. Then you can start sending messages to someone else.

When receiving a message, count the taps down as they are sent, then, after the short pause, count the taps across and you will arrive at your first letter. After a longer pause, the next letter is sent.

	1	2	3	4	5
1	A	B	C/K	D	E
2	F	G	H	I	J
3	L	M	N	O	P
4	Q	R	S	T	U
5	V	W	X	Y	Z